

Senate Bill 279 Report

Fall Semester 2022-23

June 1, 2023

Child Welfare Division
Oregon Department of Human Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Senate Bill 279, passed during the Oregon Legislature's 2021 regular session, directed Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) to collect data and submit reports to the Legislative Assembly regarding the number of children in foster care who are missing school to attend visitations scheduled by the department.

Section 2 of the bill requires the following data to be collected at the conclusion of each semester during the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years:

- a) *The number, age and grade of children in foster care who missed part or all of at least five but not more than six school days due to visitations scheduled by the department;*
- b) *The number, age and grade of children in foster care who missed part or all of at least seven but not more than eight school days due to visitations scheduled by the department;*
- c) *The number, age and grade of children in foster care who missed part or all of at least nine but not more than 10 school days due to visitations scheduled by the department;*
- d) *The number, age and grade of children in foster care who missed part or all of at least 11 but not more than 15 school days due to visitations scheduled by the department;*
- e) *The number, age and grade of children in foster care who missed part or all of more than 15 school days due to visitations scheduled by the department; and*
- f) *The most common reasons given for why it was not practicable to schedule the visitations outside of school hours.*

This is the third data collection to be submitted in compliance with SB 279. This data reflects the **fall semester** from the **2022-23 school year**.

BACKGROUND

Senate Bill 279, passed during the Oregon Legislature's 2021 regular session, directed Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) to collect data and submit reports to the Legislative Assembly regarding the number of children in foster care who are missing school to attend visitations scheduled by the department.

REQUIREMENTS OF SENATE BILL 279

Section 2 of the bill states:

(2) The Department of Human Services shall collect data regarding school days missed by children in foster care due to visitations scheduled by the department and report that data to the appropriate committees or interim committees of the Legislative Assembly at the conclusion of each semester during the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years. The reports must describe:

- a) The number, age and grade of children in foster care who missed part or all of at least five but not more than six school days due to visitations scheduled by the department.*
- b) The number, age and grade of children in foster care who missed part or all of at least seven but not more than eight school days due to visitations scheduled by the department.*
- c) The number, age and grade of children in foster care who missed part or all of at least nine but not more than 10 school days due to visitations scheduled by the department.*
- d) The number, age and grade of children in foster care who missed part or all of at least 11 but not more than 15 school days due to visitations scheduled by the department.*
- e) The number, age and grade of children in foster care who missed part or all of more than 15 school days due to visitations scheduled by the department.*
- f) The most common reasons given for why it was not practicable to schedule the visitations outside of school hours.*

(3) Not later than September 1, 2022, the Department of Human Services shall provide a report to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly regarding human services with information regarding the school days missed by children in foster care during the 2021-2022 school year due to

visitations scheduled by the department. The report must include information about any initiatives the department plans to implement to address school absences during the 2022-2023 school year. The report may also include recommendations regarding policy initiatives to support the department's efforts to improve school attendance and the educational success of children in foster care and, if applicable, budgetary resources necessary to implement the recommendations.

DATA

This report will focus only on the data from the Fall 2022 semester, as requested in the bill. A more thorough analysis was completed in the September 1, 2022 report. The statute requires the department to collect data by semester for this report. It is important to note that not all school districts operate on a semester system; some operate on a trimester system, and moreover there is variation among the 197 school districts regarding the start and stop dates of their semesters or trimesters. The department decided to set dates to function as approximate semesters for the purposes of compiling and analyzing statewide data. For the fall data collection, the selected dates are August 1, 2022 through January 31, 2023.

Currently, our OR-Kids information system does not have the capacity to track these metrics in the child's person management or electronic casefile system. A permanent tracking system is currently being built and is expected to go live before the 2023-2024 school year. In the meantime, the department is using SharePoint to track children missing school for visitations. Managers who supervise Social Service Assistants (the staff facilitating visitations/family time) tracked and submitted data to the SharePoint tracker. Reminder emails were sent to ensure all data were being captured, including information from districts where young adults in foster care did not miss any school for visitation.

In the fall 2022-2023 semester, 60 children missed all or part of at least one day of school for visitations scheduled by the department. Only 13 children missed all or part of five or more days of school for visitations. On January 1, 2023 (the last month of the first semester), there were a total of 4937 children in foster care. This translates to just **0.26 percent of children in**

foster care having five (5) or more visits that resulted in time missed from school.

Fall 2022 Total Distinct Children*

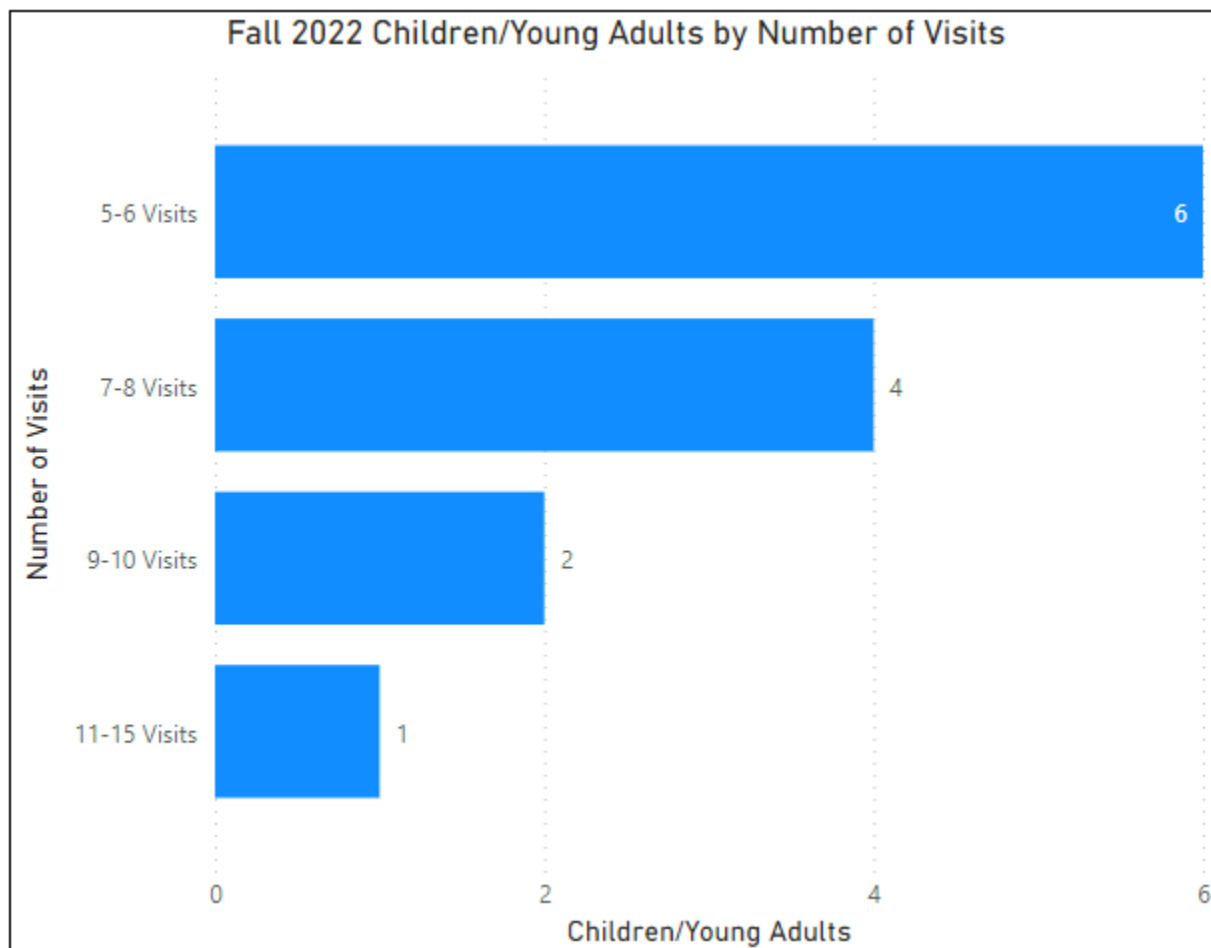
60

*Reports distinct number of children in ODHS custody who have missed school time because of a visit

Fall 2022 Children w/ 5+ Visits

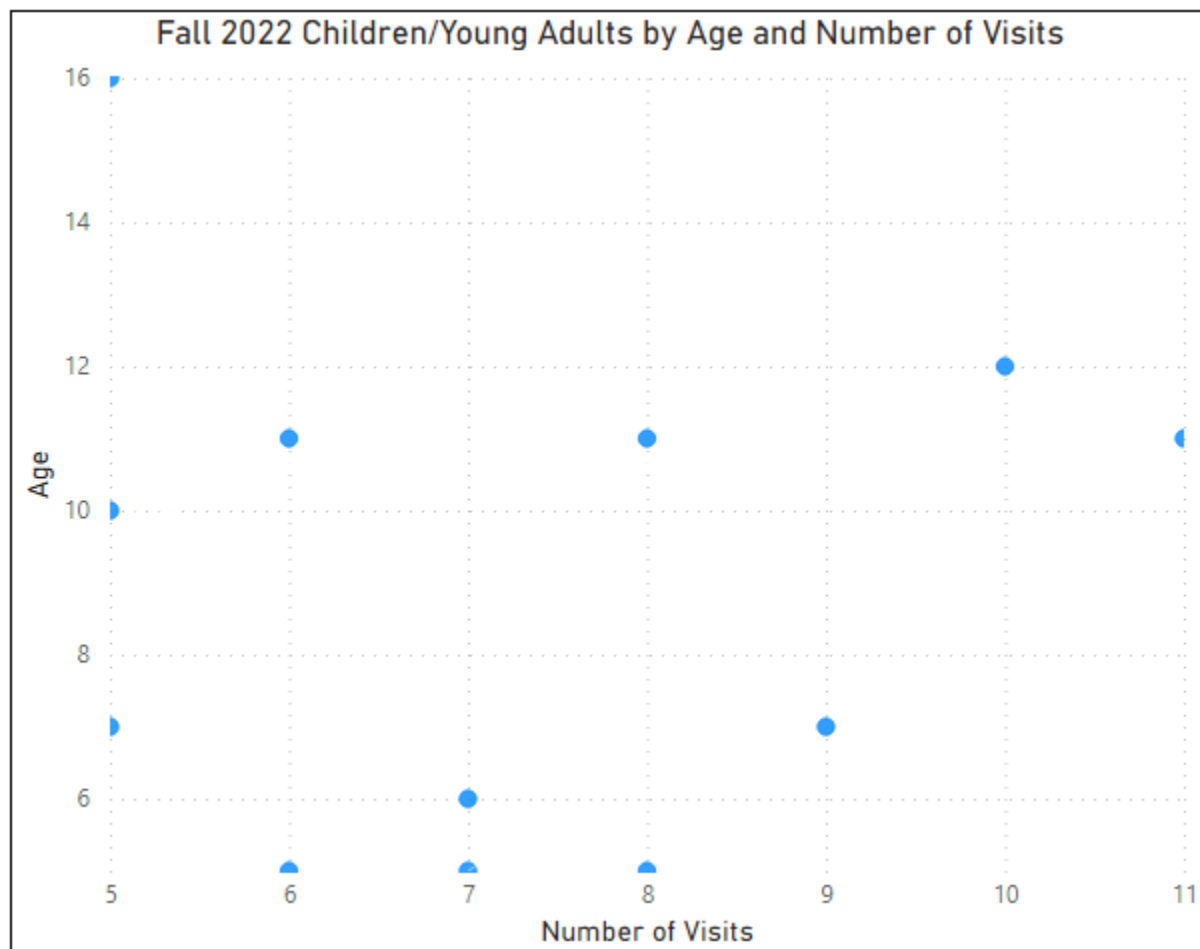
13

Children/Young Adults by Number of Visits



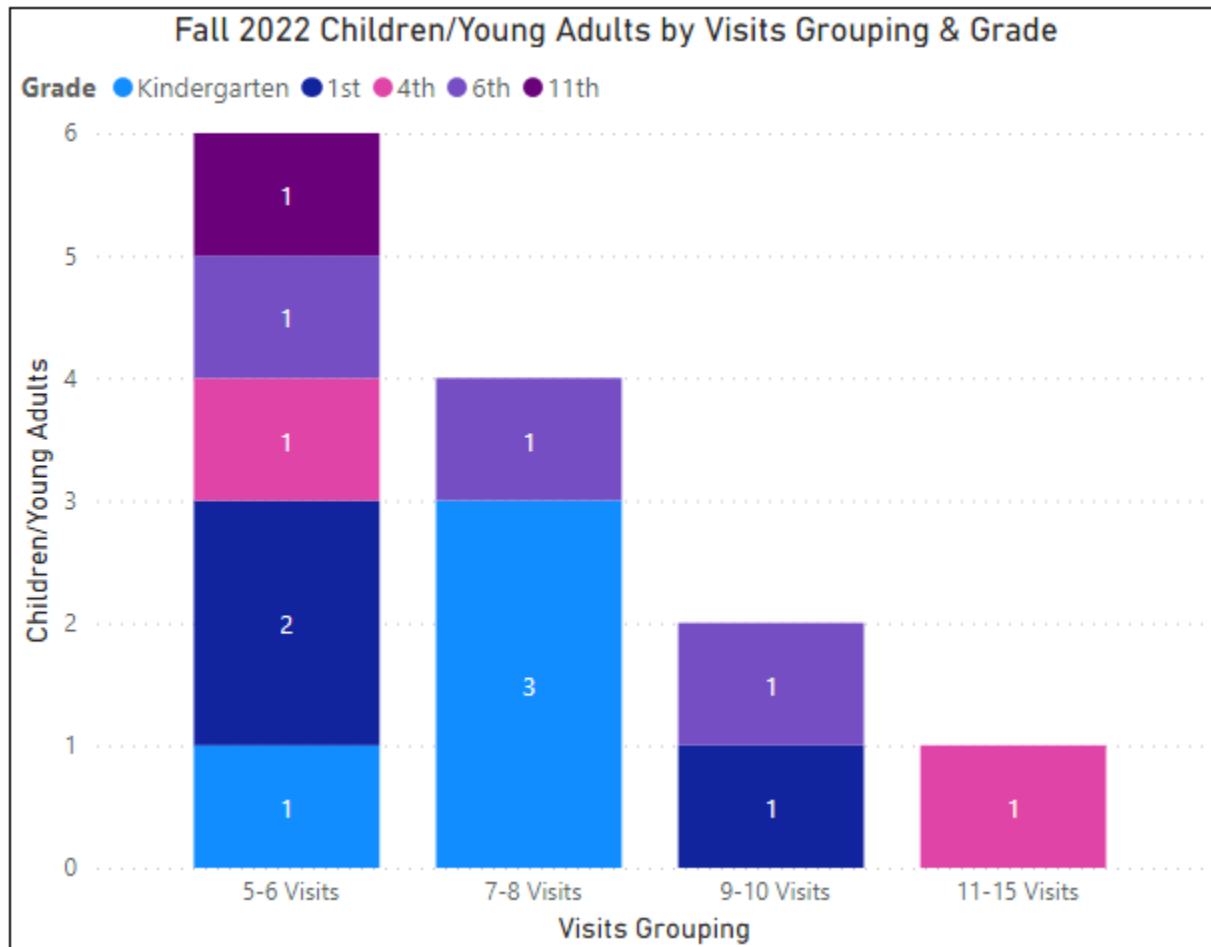
This chart displays the number of students in foster care who missed more than five days of school (all or part of the day) and the number of visitations scheduled by the department for the semester. The largest plurality of students (6) had five to six visitations that required them to miss some school. The remaining (7) students are listed in descending order of the number of visitations scheduled by the department that resulted in missing school.

Children/Young Adults by Age and Number of Visits



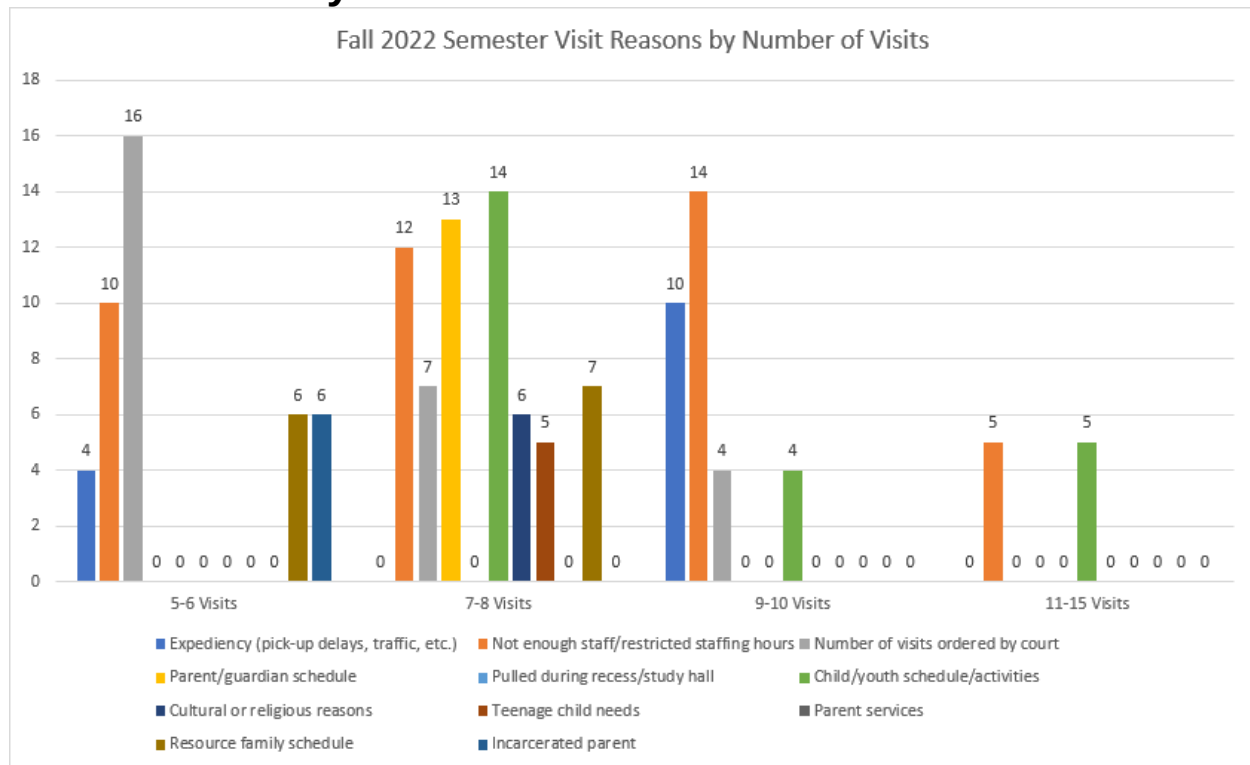
This scatter-plot chart shows the age of the students and the number of visitations scheduled by the department that resulted in missing school (all or part of a day). Only 12 data points are visible for 13 students, as there were two (2) seven-year-olds that both had five (5) visits.

Children/Young Adults by Visits Grouping and Grade



This chart shows the number of children (13 total) by grade level and the number of visitations scheduled by the department that resulted in missing school (all or part of a day).

Visit Reasons by Number of Visits



Multiple reasons could be selected for each time a child missed school. Most often, multiple reasons were selected, which creates numbers greater than the actual number of visitations scheduled by ODHS. For example, a child may miss some school for expediency of pick-up, to have the court-ordered amount of visitation time, and due to a need to navigate the parent and child's schedule.

The Expediency category (bright blue line) generally refers to the practice of picking up a child 15 to 30 minutes early, near the end of the school day. Most of the time, picking up a child early does not entail missing academic classes, as the end of the school day is often used as transition time, study hall, etc. Early pick-ups are a common strategy that guardians use to miss long pick-up lines and allow more time for the actual visitation.

During the fall 2022 semester, the most frequent reasons for missing school were: (16) Number of visits ordered by the court; (14) Child/youth schedule and activities; (14) Not enough staff/restricted staffing hours; and (13) Parent/guardian schedule.

For children missing the most school for visits (11 to 15), the only reasons were: Child/youth schedule and activities and Not enough staff/restricted staffing hours.

NEXT STEPS

Please refer to the prior report, from September 1, 2022, which contained a more thorough analysis of initiatives and policy recommendations. Data will be compiled for one more semester (spring 2023), in alignment with bill requirements. ODHS has been building a mechanism to capture this data in OR-Kids, which will be available before the 2023-2024 school year.

SUMMARY

Staff reported placing a high value on children not missing school for visitations scheduled by the department, whenever possible. The department also places a high value on ensuring children can spend quality time with their families. The complexity of parent and child schedules sometimes necessitates missing school to ensure that visitation occurs and complies with juvenile court orders. The data presented is encouraging, demonstrating that only a small number of children/young adults in foster care are missing any amount of school for visits with their families.



For additional information:

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